

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 18235 01 OF 02 071229Z

20

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /101 W
----- 043988

R 071215Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4189

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 18235

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH CSU PARTY CHAIRMAN

FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS: GERMAN INTERNAL POLITIC-
AL SCENE

1. SUMMARY: DURING A LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH THE
AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 6, CSU PARTY CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF
STRAUSS DISCOURSED AT SOME LENGTH ON THE INTERNAL
GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE. BARRING CERTAIN POSSIBLE BUT
UNLIKELY EVENTS, HIS PROGNOSIS FOR THE 1976 FEDERAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 18235 01 OF 02 071229Z

ELECTIONS ANTICIPATED THE FORMATION OF ANOTHER SPD/FDP

GOVERNMENT, BUT THE CDU SHOULD REGAIN ITS POSITION AS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY. HIS COMMENTS ON THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE POLISH-FRG AGREEMENT ARE INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE EMBASSY TELEGRAM ON THIS SUBJECT. END OF SUMMARY

2. STRAUSS BEGAN BY DESCRIBING IN SOME DETAIL THE INTERNAL SITUATION WITHIN THE CDU/CSU. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY UNHAPPY ABOUT THE WIDESPREAD PRESS CRITICISM OF HIS ROLE DURING RECENT WEEKS IN ALLEGEDLY TRYING TO FORCE CDU CHANCELLOR-CANDIDATE KOHL TO TAKE HARDER POSITIONS ON THE POLISH AGREEMENT, PARTY ECONOMIC POLICIES AND PERSONNEL QUESTIONS, THAN HE MIGHT OTHERWISE BE INCLINED TO TAKE.

3. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 1976 ELECTIONS, STRAUSS SAID THE POSSIBILITY OF SCHMIDT'S DECIDING NOT TO CONTINUE AS CHANCELLOR COULD NOT ENTIRELY BE ELIMINATED. THERE WAS A CABAL WITHIN THE LEFT-WING OF THE SPD GROOMING FORMER CHANCELLOR BRANDT AS A READY AND WILLING REPLACEMENT SHOULD THIS OCCUR. IN HIS (STRAUSS') VIEW, SCHMIDT WAS NOT REALLY THE IRON-WILLED, HARD-HITTING MAN OF DECISION OF HIS PUBLIC IMAGE. HE WAS KNOWN FREQUENTLY TO EXPRESS IN PRIVATE DISGUST WITH HIS LIFE AS CHANCELLOR AND TO THREATEN TO CHUCK THE WHOLE BUSINESS. PARTICULARLY GALLING TO SCHMIDT WAS THE NEED FOR HIM TO TAKE PUBLIC POSITIONS ON SUCH MATTERS AS CO-DETERMINATION, HIS RELATIONS WITH BRANDT, AND ECONOMIC POLICY, AT VARIANCE WITH HIS OWN PERSONAL CONVICTIONS.

4. ASSUMING, HOWEVER, STRAUSS CONTINUED, THAT SCHMIDT WERE THE CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE OF THE SPD, AS ON BALANCE SEEMED LIKELY, HE WOULD NOT BE HELPED BY THE PROBABLE CONTINUING SLACK ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE IMMEDIATE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. WHILE SOME IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PRESENT WAS LIKELY, THE BASIC STRUCTURAL DEFECTS OF THE GERMAN ECONOMY WOULD STILL BE WITHOUT REMEDY, AND UNEMPLOYMENT WOULD REMAIN AT A RELATIVELY HIGH FIGURE. NEVERTHELESS, STRAUSS BELIEVED THAT, AFTER THE ELECTIONS, THE SPD AND FDP WOULD AGAIN BE IN A POSITION

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 18235 01 OF 02 071229Z

TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE CDU/CSU WOULD REGAIN THE POSITION OF SINGLE LARGEST POLITICAL GROUPING IN THE FRG. GIVEN THE BALANCING ROLE OF THE FDP AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY SUPPORT IN THE FRG, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE CDU/CSU TO WIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN 1976.

5. TWO FURTHER FACTORS TENDED TO WEAKEN THE CDU/CSU

EFFORT: THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE CDU ON FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC POLICY, AND CERTAIN PERSONAL INADEQUACIES ON THE PART OF KOHL AS CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE DUE LARGE- LY TO HIS LACK OF NATIONAL EXPERIENCE. AS TO THE FIRST, THE FIGHT WITHIN THE CDU OVER THE POLISH AGREEMENT AND HIS (STRAUSS') CLASH WITH BIEDENKOPF OVER ECONOMIC POLICY WERE EXAMPLES OF THESE DIVISIVE FACTORS. WHILE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE CDU WAS OPPOSED TO THE POLISH AGREEMENT, A NUMBER OF INFLUENTIAL PERSONALITIES SUCH AS SCHROEDER, VON WEISZAECKER, AND KIEP, WOULD VOTE WITH THE GOVERNMENT, THUS EMPHASIZING PUBLICLY THE SPLIT WITHIN THE PARTY. IT WAS CERTAINLY UNEDIFYING,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 18235 02 OF 02 071235Z

20

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /101 W

----- 044070

R 071215Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4190

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

CINC USAF RAMSTEIN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 18235

AND IMPOSSIBLE IN THE LONG RUN, TO HAVE SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PARTY LEADERS IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TAKING POSITIONS CONTRARY TO THOSE OF THEIR CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE. KIEP PARTICULARLY, AS OFFICIAL PARTY SPOKESMAN FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SIMPLY HAD TO LEAVE, STRAUSS EMPHASIZED. WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, A DELEGATION OF SENIOR CDU MEMBERS OF THE BUNDESTAG WOULD MAKE A FORMAL APPROACH TO KOHL ASKING THAT KIEP BE REPLACED.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 18235 02 OF 02 071235Z

6. KOHL'S INABILITY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE KIEP PROBLEM, STRAUSS WENT ON, WAS ONE EXAMPLE OF HIS NEED TO DEVELOP MORE DECISIVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES. AS EARLY AS LAST SPRING, HE HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT KIEP MUST GO, BUT HAD FOUND ONE REASON AFTER ANOTHER FOR DELAYING ACTION. IN ASSESSING KOHL'S QUALITIES, STRAUSS CONTINUED, ONE HAD TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAD FIRST-CLASS POLITICAL INSTINCTS, AND WAS ALSO A GOOD ADMINISTRATOR AND MANAGER. HIS EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN LIMITED TO RUNNING A RELATIVELY SMALL "LAND" GOVERNMENT, AND IT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED THAT HE WOULD ACQUIRE A NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW OVERNIGHT. IT WAS ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT HE DEMONSTRATE DECISIVENESS ON THE MAJOR ISSUES, AND HE, STRAUSS IMPLIED, SAW LITTLE CHANCE FOR MAJOR IMPROVEMENT PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. STRAUSS WENT INTO CONSIDERABLE DETAIL AT THIS POINT IN DESCRIBING KOHL'S "MISHANDLING" OF THE INTERNAL PARTY DISCUSSION OF THE POLISH AGREEMENT (REPORTED SEPARATELY IN A MORE GENERAL EMBASSY TELEGRAM ON THE SUBJECT).

7. ANOTHER SUBJECT WHICH STRAUSS DEVELOPED AT SOME LENGTH WAS HIS FIGHT WITH CDU SECRETARY GENERAL BIEDENKOPF OVER THE AHLENER PROGRAM AND ECONOMIC POLICY. HE STRESSED THAT THE AHLENER PRINCIPLES, WHICH HAD NEVER REALLY BEEN ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL CDU, HAD LONG SINCE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS AND THE ENDORSEMENT BY THE PARTY OF THE SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY APPROACH. BIEDENKOPF'S ATTEMPT TO RESURRECT THE AHLENER PROGRAM REFLECTED BOTH LACK OF POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND HISTORICAL INSIGHT. STRAUSS CONCLUDED WITH A NUMBER OF FURTHER UNCOMPLIMENTARY REFERENCES TO BIEDENKOPF WHICH CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED HIS PERSONAL HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE SECRETARY GENERAL.

COMMENT: STRAUSS SEEMED TO BE IN A MIXED MOOD, DETERMINED TO PUSH HIS OWN VIEWS ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE POLISH AGREEMENT, ECONOMIC AND PERSONNEL POLICIES, ELECTORAL TACTICS, ETC., REGARDLESS OF THE FALLOUT OR EVEN THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE 1976 ELECTIONS, THOUGH HE WOULD MAINTAIN, OF COURSE, THAT ONLY BY FOLLOWING HIS LINE WHOLEHEARTEDLY COULD THE CDU/CSU HOPE AT ALL TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 18235 02 OF 02 071235Z

WIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY NEXT OCTOBER. HE APPARENTLY FEELS HE HAS HIS OPPONENTS SUCH AS BIEDENKOPF AND KIEP ON THE RUN, AND THAT HE HAS ENOUGH LEVERAGE ON KOHL TO MAKE HIM GENERALLY ACCEPT HIS VIEWS, NO MATTER HOW RELUCTANTLY IN SOME CASES. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT BUT THAT IN HIS OWN MIND STRAUSS STILL REGARDS HIMSELF AS THE BEST POSSIBLE CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE, BUT HAS ACCEPTED THAT THIS COULD NOT BE, AT LEAST IN 1976.

HILLENBRAND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL LEADERS, VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BONN18235
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750387-0806
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751165/aaaacfyf.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH CSU PARTY CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS: GERMAN INTERNAL POLITIC-
TAGS: PFOR, GE, CSU, (STRAUSS, FRANZ JOSEF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006